

Damiens' bed of steel. In 1757 Damiens, an insane fanatic, attempted to kill Louis XV, King of France. He was bound upon an iron bed and subjected to terrible tortures.

437. These tortures are rarely known to men who are not engaged in public affairs.

HOME THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA.

Written on the occasion of a voyage from England to Italy in 1838. As the vessel passes the south-west coast of Portugal and Spain, Cape St. Vincent, Cadiz and Trafalgar are seen in turn, and as darkness is coming on, Gibraltar rises dimly in the distance. The poem expresses Browning's feelings as he calls to memory the great victories of England that are connected with these historic scenes.

1. **Cape St. Vincent.** A cape at the south-east extremity of Portugal. In 1709 Admiral Jervis with a British fleet of fifteen vessels, defeated a Spanish fleet of twenty-seven vessels.

2. **reeking.** We often speak of blood as reeking, that is, steaming (*Ger. rauchen*, to smoke). So here the sunset is spoken of also as reeking because it is red like blood.

Cadiz Bay. Off the south-west coast of Spain. Cadiz was sacked by the English fleet under Essex in 1596.

3. **bluish.** The land was bluish when seen in the distance.
full in face. Directly ahead of the vessel.

Trafalgar. Cape Trafalgar, on the south-west coast of Spain. At Trafalgar in 1805 Nelson defeated the combined fleets of France and Spain.

4. **dimmost north-east distance.** After the vessel passed Trafalgar and turned to enter the straits, the rock of Gibraltar was seen dimly to the north-east. Consult a good map or atlas.

dawned. Appeared dimly on the horizon.

Gibraltar. The fortress of Gibraltar came into the hands of the English in 1704. It was, later in the century, successfully defended against a number of attacks.

5. **Here and here.** In the battles he has mentioned.

say. The subject of *say* is the noun clause following.